The National Leprosy Eradication Programme is being implemented as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme in all the States/UTs of the country with the objective of reaching the level of elimination i.e. leprosy cases less than one per ten thousand population in the country by 2005.

The number of TB cases being reported over the last few years under the National TB Control Programme have been more or less static.

Due to epidemiological situation pertaining to TB, it is technically not possible to eradicat the disease at this point of time. Government of India is operating the National TB Control Programme (NTCP) to control the disease.

For the control of TB, in order to achieve a cure rate of 85% of new sputum positive cases and to detect at least 70% of such cases, Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP) is being implemented in the country in a phased manner. About 770 million population have been covered in about 425 districts of the country. It is envisaged to cover 850 million population by 2004 and the entire country by 2005. (85%). Currently 8 out of every 10 patients treated for TB are being completely-cured.

Only three cases of SARS were repored in India, all imported from affected countries. The action taken by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in coordination with the State Government had prevented outbreak of SARS in the country.

Export of Aids Drugs

2083. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country is now a major exporter of cheap anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS; if so, the details of countries where the medicines are being exported; and

(b) whether any proposal is under Government's consideration to provide free or subsidized treatment for this disease to the poor; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir. The countries where anti-retroviral drugs are being exported by the Indian Pharma industry are brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Columbia, Cambodia and Thailand etc.

(b) Government is actively contemplating expansion of a programme on care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS across the six high prevalence states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu, so as to include anti-retroviral drugs for specific target groups, through the pubic health care system.

Treatment for Osteoporosis

2084. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the AIIMS, among others, has been asked by ICMR to gear up for better osteoporosis treatment; if so, the details of such other centres;

(b) whether it is a fact that the bones of Indian people have poorer mineral content than those of African and Asian descent and whether around 1.5 crores of our population suffers from bones diseases; and

(c) whether a meet on the subject was held in AIIMS premises last October to create awareness about this disease, if so, the details of the observations made at this meet?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to.(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

WHO's Report on TB Patients

2085. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a report issued recently by World Health organisation states that more than 4.5 million persons in India are suffering from Tuberculosis-the highest number of TB patients in the world; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to launch on massive scale a renewed campaign to check the scourage of TB?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To control the disease, National TB Control Programme is in operation in the country since 1962. Revised National TB Control Programme based on DOTS, which is a WHO recommended strategy, is